

~~TOP SECRET~~ 1-20-6
By # 2
20 January 1959

NOTE TO THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Comment on Department of State Staff Summary

1. With respect to your request for comment on the staff summary item on Soviet military reduction, there is no doubt that Khrushchev's announcement of the number of Soviet forces in being and prospective reductions had, as a very important by product, the aim of weakening NATO resolve to maintain shield forces. Would also agree in general with last three sentences of the paragraph.

2. Do not believe the prospective reduction will be unverifiable. I believe that if it takes place we can verify it with considerable accuracy. Also believe that reductions will proceed generally as Khrushchev has announced. Numbers may not be exactly as he indicated, nor time interval as short.

3. Main purpose was not necessarily to achieve budget relief -- tho this was important. Main purpose was to

STAT

rationalize forces in terms of new weapons without reducing either nuclear or conventional capability, and make possible a shift of manpower to industry where it is needed.

4. The point the Department could have made to NATO was: The announced cuts make good sense from point of view of the Soviets. They can save money, go forward the better with the 7 year plan, and suffer no diminution of either nuclear or conventional capabilities. The military threat to NATO has not been diminished.

SHERMAN KERT